

4 FUN Quizzes! Special Treats for Holiday Parties

American ★ Girl

November/December 2018

Shine
Bright!
4 Hanukkah
Crafts

MEET AG'S
Editor-for-a-Day
Winners

PRETTY
Ornaments
for Your Tree

LEARN HOW
TO MAKE THIS
LUMINARIA ON
PAGE 27

Awww!
Sweet Story
about a
Lost Dog

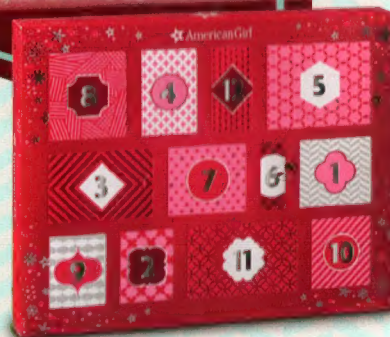


ADVERTISEMENT



New!
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Calendar

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to reveal special gifts*



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Contents

Follow Your Inner Star™
Volume 26, Number 6

Page
18



Page
41



The luminarias match
sloane's and wren's shirts!
coincidence?



Page
27

- 2 The Buzz**
- 3 Girls Express**
- 8 Creative Cafe**
- 10 Go for It!**
- 12 According to Aggie**
- 14 Contest Winners**
- 18 Team of Two**

- 20 This or That or That**
- 22 Pretzel Party**
- 26 Festival of Lights**
- 28 Best Friend Brain Busters**
- 30 Woodland Wonderland**
- 32 The Gratitude Project**

- 40 Gift Quiz**
- 41 Who's That Girl?**
- 43 Posters**
- 45 Help**
- 48 Behind the Scenes**

Plus
AG's Pretzel Bags!



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10% post-consumer waste

THE BUZZ



FROM THE WINNERS

Hi! This is Wren and Sloane, and we are the winners of the "Be an AG Editor" contest. We came to headquarters from our home in Colorado, and we got to see the the magazine come to life by picking the winners of the mug contest on page 8, helping to create the pretzel recipes on page 22, and photographing an adorable puppy named Tobias on page 43. We think this issue is really creative and fun. Everybody at AG is super nice and loves meeting girls like you. Our best advice: Keep putting yourself out there—you never know what you can accomplish!



Wren & Sloane

Write to Us!

BE SURE TO INCLUDE

- * First and last name
- * Address and phone number
- * Birth date, including year
- * School photo or other portrait
- * Parent's signature

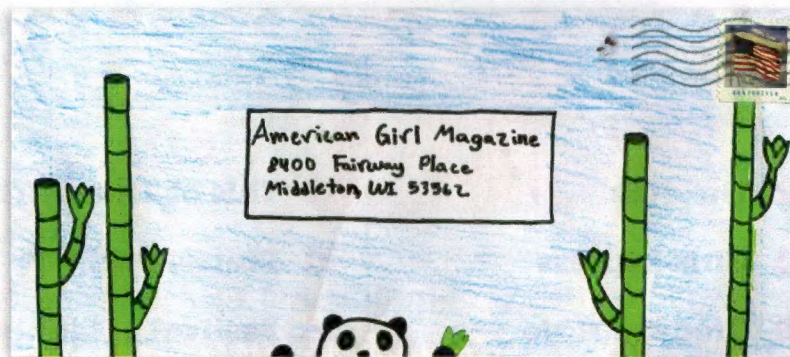
SNAIL MAIL

Send us a cool envelope!
Print our address neatly on the front and your return address and the section of the magazine you're writing to on the back.



OR CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

PLAY.AMERICANGIRL.COM/PLAY/MAGAZINE



we can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. hope to hear from you soon!



ENVELOPE ART BY

Avery H.

Avery H.
Age 11, Washington



Safety first!

Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help. When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

Girls EXPRESS

FOR & BY GIRLS!

Use different craft
tape on the back
of the clothespins
to create a
double-sided
wreath!



Wintry Wreath

Create a clothespin
wreath to decorate
for the holidays!

Spruce up your door with a craft tape wreath!
Cover clothespins with craft tape or kid-friendly nontoxic paint
and let dry. Pin to the outer ring of an embroidery hoop to create
a colorful wreath. Ask an adult to help you hang your wreath.

AG POLL



Answer these questions to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.



Which shop would you most like to own?

- 41% Dog treat bakery
- 30% Fancy jewelry store
- 15% Surf shop
- 14% Sports equipment store

Which famous job sounds most fun?

- 49% Artist
- 24% Athlete
- 18% Inventor
- 9% Podcast host






What do you like to do at an amusement park?

- 33% Go on a ride with your family
- 25% Eat sugary treats
- 22% Ride a huge roller coaster
- 20% Get your face painted



MINI Quiz

Which winter scene would you jump into?

1. You wake up and it's freezing outside! What's your first thought?
 - a. What a perfect day to bake cookies.
 - b. Time to go outside and play in the snow!
 - c. Let's get crafting.
2. Which postcard would you like to receive in the mail?
 - a. 
 - b. 
 - c. 
3. Which words come to mind when you think of winter break?
 - a. Cozy and warm
 - b. Adventure and outdoors
 - c. Crafty and creative
4. Where do you like to do your homework?
 - a. Wrapped up in a comfy chair—the more snuggled up, the better!
 - b. Next to a window—watching the snowflakes fall makes you work faster. You can't wait to get outside!
 - c. At the desk in your room—that's where all your best thoughts come.
5. Which holiday decorations are your favorite?
 - a. The cute plush reindeer sitting on the couch in your family room
 - b. The sparkly snowflake ornaments hanging on your tree
 - c. The DIY winter bird feeder you made at craft camp last year

Answers

Mostly a's

WARM & COZY
Sipping hot cocoa by the fire



Mostly b's

THE GREAT OUTDOORS
Snowshoeing a wintry trail



Mostly c's

CITY SHOPPING
Enjoying an outdoor holiday market





You can
Shine, too!

Are you passionate about an issue affecting your community? Brainstorm ways you can make a difference using your talents.

When 13-year-old Gitanjali R. found out that some people in the United States were drinking contaminated water without knowing it, she was determined to help.

"Water is a valuable resource," she says. "It was shocking to see how many people, including kids my age, were affected by this huge, huge problem." She researched the topic. Then she came up with an idea to create an inexpensive and easy-to-use water testing device.

She brainstormed designs, drawing her device on paper. Then she built a

model with cardboard. She worked in her science room at home, which is devoted to homework and science projects. One of the hardest parts was juggling work on the project with schoolwork, playing piano, and swimming.

In 2017, Gitanjali entered her idea in a contest for young scientists. Chosen as one of ten finalists, she worked with a mentor to transform her idea into a working device, which won the contest. She hopes it will be available soon to help people monitor their water. "Clean water," she says, "always makes you feel good."



AGART GALLERY

Our readers sent in some incredible envelopes!

HELP US FILL
OUR GALLERY!

Send color copies of original artwork or photos to the address on page 2. Sorry, we can't return entries.



Gracie G.
Age 14, Nebraska



Nicole A.
Age 13, Canada



Emily F.
Age 11, California

Meet a Reader's Pet

Sofia loves to hang out with her chicken, Tillie.

Describe the day you got your pet.

It was magical! She was the one who stood out from all the other chicks.

Do you celebrate your pet's birthday?

Of course! We give Tillie an extra bowl of soaked grains.

Describe a time your pet was naughty.

Tillie knocked over her water bowl and it got all the other chickens wet!

Tell us about your pet's favorite spot.

Her favorite spot is her nesting box in the chicken coop.

How would you describe your pet in three words?

Funny, smart, kind

How do you show your pet you love her?

I give her extra grain and let her walk with me.

Sofia A.
Age 13, Alaska



Tillie loves it when I hold her!



To find out how
your pet can be
featured, go to

[americangirl.com/
playmagazine](http://americangirl.com/playmagazine)

TRUE STORY

Dear American Girl,

Do you like hunting for rocks? Looking everywhere to find cool, different things? I love getting my hands dirty and finding cool rocks in different shapes and sizes and colors. To me, it's like a little adventure.

Recently I was digging while my sister played in a soccer game. I saw something glinting under the dirt. I dug it out with a stick and brushed it off. It had some rainbow in it, like red and orange and yellow. It was really pretty, and sort of smooth with a spiral shape. I showed my mom and she told me she thought it was a fossil. That's a rock that has the shape or the remains of prehistoric life. Later on, an expert told us my rock is called an "ammonite." It's between 6 million and 21 million years old, from when dinosaurs were still alive!

I've been collecting rocks and other things like acorns, shells, and feathers for years. I keep them in an overflowing treasure box. But finding that ammonite made me feel special. It was like I was the chosen one. That made me happy.

Naomi V.
Age 7, Oregon



Snowy Snacks

Make the perfect winter snack mix with these delicious ingredients!

Add white chocolate-covered pretzels, dried cranberries, popcorn, and mini marshmallows to a bowl. Enjoy!



CREATIVE case

WELCOME WINTER WITH READERS' CLEVER MUG DESIGNS

Penguin Party



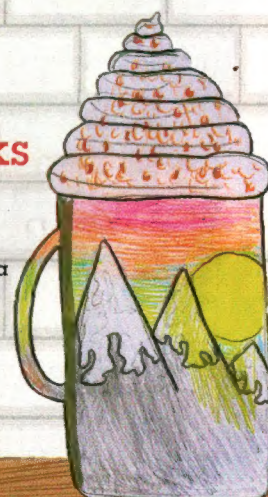
Evelyn R.
Age 11, Virginia



Highest Peaks



Lauren L.
Age 11, California



Pineapple Perfection



Sofia E.
Age 12, Delaware



Gone Fishin'



Paige P.
Age 11, Oklahoma



Teacup Pup



Kate P.
Age 12, Colorado



Extra Everything



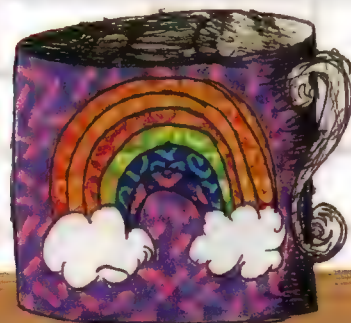
Iliahi R.
Age 9, Hawaii



Rainbowhood



MATILDA L.
Age 12, New York



Sunset Ice Dance



Marie W.
Age 13, Georgia



NEW Contest

TREE-RIFIC

Imagine a tree that could grow anything you'd like—maybe cupcakes or slippers or water balloons! What would grow on your tree?

Follow the instructions on page 2 to mail your tree-rific drawing to us! Postmark deadline: December 10, 2018. Sorry—we can't return entries. ★

GO for IT!

From tasting new foods to finding ways to be kind, you told us what you'd most like to do before the year ends.



You have a real taste for adventure! Here are a few foods you said you'd be willing to try:

- * 52% Chocolate-covered bacon
- * 20% Roasted chestnuts
- * 15% Stuffed squash blossoms
- * 13% Tomato soup topped with marshmallows

Girls like you are eager to go to ...



- * 57% would love to skate on a frozen pond.
- * 43% hope to visit one of the Great Lakes.



Here's to a year of great reading goals!
Next you want to read . . .

- * 43% a new book from a favorite author.
- * 25% a favorite book.
- * 16% an old book.
- * 10% a book your mom or dad picks for you.
- * 6% an awesome random book pick!

Illustrations: Paige Pooler



- * 47% Teach someone something you do well.

Thank You

- * 22% Write a thank-you note to your school principal.

You said these caring acts of kindness are a great way to finish the year:

- * 19% Give each member of your family a sincere compliment.

- * 12% Do a favor for a neighbor.

Coming Up: **FAVORITE PLACES**

1. **When you need a moment to yourself, your favorite place to spend time is . . .**
 - a. in your room.
 - b. on a porch or swing.
 - c. in a cozy reading nook.
 - d. outside.
 - e. in a warm bubble bath.
2. **Where's your favorite place to do your homework?**
3. **Where is your favorite place to be loud?**
 - a. A sporting event
 - b. A concert
 - c. A school dance
 - d. The pool
4. **You'd rather visit a place . . .**
 - a. you've been to before.
 - b. you've never been to.
5. **Your perfect hideaway spot would be . . .**
 - a. an awesome tree house.
 - b. a secret room behind a bookcase.
 - c. a cute mini house.
 - d. a secret garden.
 - e. a redone school bus.
 - f. an epic game room.
6. **Draw a sign for the door of your hideaway!**

Send your answers to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, portrait-style or school photo, and birth date. Postmark deadline: December 10, 2018. ★

According to Aggie™

Think Rink

Created by
Mary Richards Bedumont, Dan Nordskog
& Genevieve Kote

WELCOME TO THE BEAR DEN

Our first Ice Bears game of the season!

Where to first?

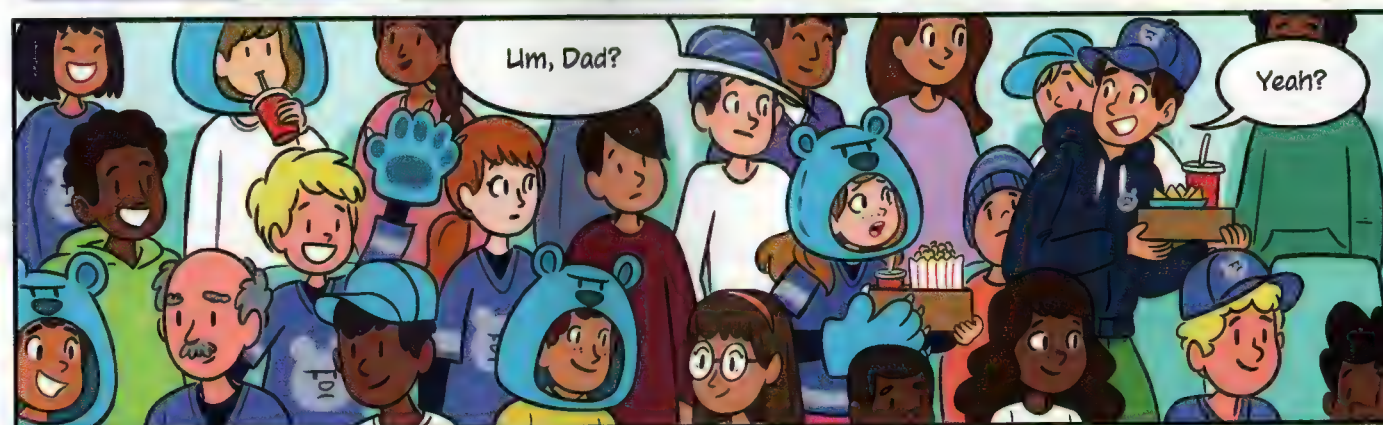
The Snow Den! I've been saving up, and I want a new claw.

They're looking great so far. With Carmichael healthy, THIS is their season.

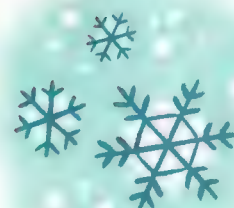
That is IF Dunkirk can stop getting suspended. What is the point of having him in the penalty box all the time?

We need him ON the ice.

Ohhh, ears!



Don't miss my next
misadventure:
S'NO FORT



Contest

Last January, American Girl magazine launched a contest, asking two friends to tell us something special they've done together. The prize was coming to American Girl headquarters in Wisconsin to be editors for a day and work on this issue of the magazine. The entries poured in, and our staff read every single story. Each one inspired us in different ways, and each story was special. It was difficult to choose a winner! But our staff agreed that **Wren** and **Sloane's** story was the one we wanted to share with all of AG's readers. Thanks to everyone who entered! Our readers are doing great things all over the world!



WINNERS



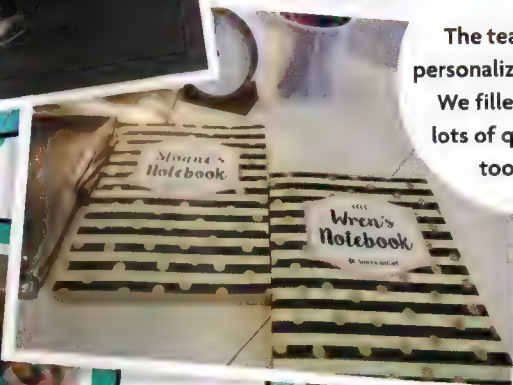
We got to ride in a limo from our hotel to American Girl headquarters!



Our office had a cute sign with our names on it.



We got VIP American Girl badges.



The team made us personalized notebooks. We filled them with lots of questions and took notes.

We had so much fun looking through the upcoming issue of *American Girl* magazine. We got some amazing sneak peeks!



Barbara showed us how the magazine is put together.



We had a blast
taste-testing the
treats from Pretzel
Party on page 22.



The Peppermint Pops
we made turned
out great.



Taste-testing
was hard work!



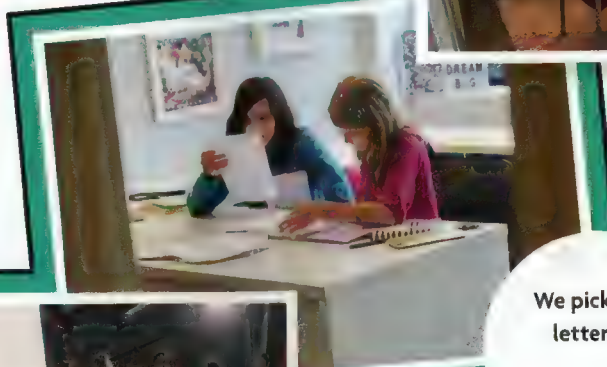
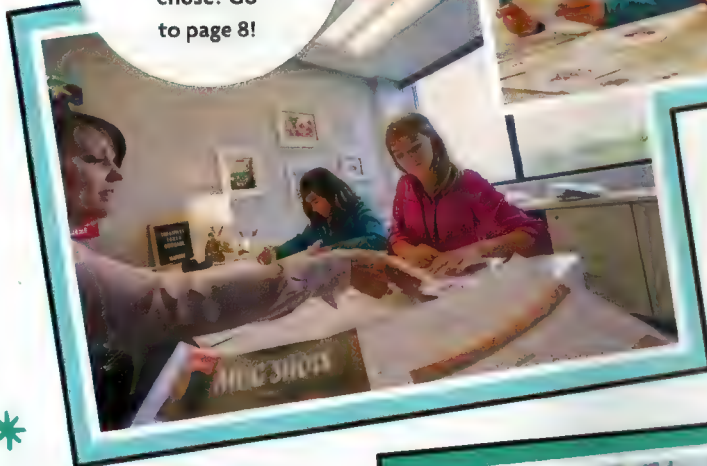
We used pink candy
melts to turn these
pretzels into cute
little trees.



We picked
Contest winners
with Chrissy. Want
to know who we
chose? Go
to page 8!



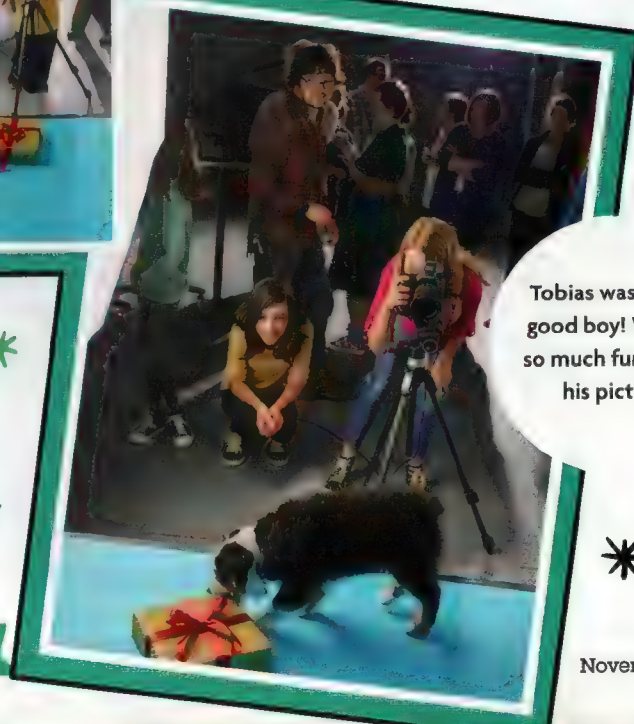
We chatted with
Barbara about our work
with the environment.
Read our story
on page 18.



We picked Help
letters, too.



American Girl's
photographer David
showed us how to shoot
on his camera. We
photographed this cute
puppy for the Posters
on page 43.



Tobias was such a
good boy! We had
so much fun taking
his picture.

TEAM OF TWO

With the help of other fifth-graders, Wren and Sloane saved part of an important river in their community.

by Sloane S. and Wren C.

In our town in Colorado, we spend every day among beautiful mountains, trees, and prairies. There are a lot of animals here, too, and our favorites are moose, bears, and porcupines. We are outside all the time, summer or winter, doing things like hiking and skiing.

There's an important river that runs through our town, and it's the heart of where we live. People like to gather there, and sometimes we tube down the river, or jump in it to cool off. The wildlife in the area rely on it for their homes. Everyone can unite in the

awesomeness of this river. It means so much to all of us who live here.

A little while ago, part of the river was getting wider and shallower. That meant that it was becoming warmer, and fish were having trouble creating suitable habitats. A few years ago, a group rebuilt the river's bank. But then the riverbank began to erode again. That's where we came in: When we got the call to come and support our prized river, we immediately answered, "Yes!"

We were a part of a team of fifth-graders who came

together to help preserve the riverbank. We needed to plant trees along the banks so that the roots would hold the river in place, which would help keep it from getting too wide and shallow. The new trees also provide shade for the river, keeping the water cool for the fish. And the trees are important because they

provide habitats for birds, squirrels, and bugs.

Because we needed to plant so many trees, we asked our community for money and other supplies. We wrote grants (which are proposals that ask for money for a specific project), and we talked to local businesses

**WE REALLY CARE ABOUT
OUR ENVIRONMENT.
AND BEING IN NATURE IS
A BIG PART OF OUR LIVES.**



This beautiful river is so important to us!





The river was molded into a better shape, and the trees we planted will help keep the river's new shape.



That's us! Wren is on the left and Sloane is on the right.

IT MEANS A LOT TO US TO KNOW THAT WE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR WORLD!

to ask them for supplies such as pots, compost, digging equipment, and tree seedlings.

Next, it was time for our troop of 20 kids to get to work! We planted more than 80 fragile willow and alder seedlings into pots. The newly planted trees would spend several months in their pots at a nursery, getting stronger and bigger. When we

finally got to plant the trees by the river, we were so excited to see our trees in their new home.

We really care about our environment, and being in nature is a big part of our lives. We don't want to see it destroyed, and we want our home—and our awesome river—to be around for

generations to come. We felt really good about making a difference, not just for the river but also for the plants and animals that live there.

The biggest thing we learned during this project is that if you are passionate, don't be afraid to try. Sometimes it takes a lot of tries to make something happen. It's cool to be passionate about your town and the well-being of the place where you live. We worked with people who are just as passionate about the environment as we are. It means a lot to us to know that we made a difference in our world! ★



I love helping the environment!



Ready to plant the trees along the riverbank



We planted so many trees! The wire cages protect the new trees until they grow bigger.

This or That or That

Whether you're looking for fun **OR** insight
OR a few laughs, this quiz is for you!

Would you rather...

be a
governor
OR
a mayor
OR
a sheriff?

conduct
an orchestra
OR
direct a play
OR
film a movie?

lead a
mountain-biking tour
OR
a city
street-food tour
OR
a tour of your school
for a new student?

be a movie
writer
OR
a movie
director
OR
a movie costume
designer?

pilot a
passenger jet
OR
a steamboat
OR
a space
mission?

be a camp
counselor
OR
be a camp
director
OR
just go
camping on
your own?

teach your best
friend a recipe by
writing out instructions
OR
by making the
recipe with her
OR
by having her cook the
recipe and then tasting
the results?

run for
student council
representative
OR
student council
treasurer
OR
student council
president?

be your
own boss at a
tech company
OR
a fashion
design studio
OR
a restaurant?

create
classroom rules
OR
enforce
classroom rules
OR
follow
classroom rules?

plan a
party
OR
a trip
OR
a school
group
project?

have a teacher
who's strict but fair

OR

loose and laid-back

OR

bossy but funny?

have a coach who's silly

OR

serious and focused

OR

inspirational?

be captain of the
basketball team

OR

the dance team

OR

the debate team?

show a new student
the rules at school by
writing a list of what to
do and what not to do

OR

loudly pointing out when
a student breaks the rules

OR

following the rules yourself
to set a good example?

live in a country
ruled by a good
and kind queen

OR

a panel of the
smartest citizens

OR

leaders elected
by the people?

make the
rules yourself

OR

vote on the rules
with a group

OR

forget about
following rules?

be a singer

OR

a songwriter

OR

a singing show host?

navigate for
a group hike
with a map

OR

with the GPS
on your phone

OR

using the signs
of nature?

teach your friends a new
board game by reading
the rules out loud

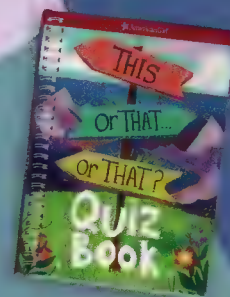
OR

by playing a
practice round

OR

by using new players'
mistakes to your
advantage?

More fun can be
found in *This or
That... or That?*
Quiz Book! ★



Pretzel

PARTY

New twists on pretzels
are the perfect dessert
for festive fun!



When making these recipes,
ask an adult to place baking
sheets in the oven and remove
them for you.




Reindeer Treats

Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Arrange mini pretzel twists in rows, a couple of inches apart. Place an unwrapped chocolate caramel candy on top of each pretzel. Bake in a preheated 250-degree oven for about 5 minutes until candy softens. Ask an adult to remove the pan from the oven. Make the reindeer face by pressing two candy eyes and a red candy into the softened chocolate. To make antlers, break a pretzel twist in half. Then stick each half into the softened chocolate. Let set.



Poinsettia Pretzels

Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Arrange square pretzels in rows, a couple of inches apart. Place a white candy melt on top of each pretzel. Bake in a preheated 250-degree oven for about 5 minutes until candy melts soften. Ask an adult to remove the pan from the oven. Place a yellow candy-coated chocolate in the center of the candy melt. Then add red candy-coated chocolates for petals. Let set.



melting instructions for candy melts



Ask an adult to help with this step. Pour 1 (16-ounce) package of candy melts into a microwave-safe bowl. Heat in a microwave on high for 1 minute; then stir. Heat the candy for 30 seconds; then stir again. Repeat heating for 30 seconds and stirring until the candy is melted.



Peppermint Pops

Cover your work surface with wax paper. Melt white or chocolate candy melts according to the instructions. Dip a pretzel rod halfway into the melted candy. (If you can't dip the pretzel very easily, spoon the chocolate over it.) Let excess chocolate drip back into the bowl. Holding the pretzel rod over a different bowl, coat the melted candy with sprinkles. Place the pretzels on wax paper to harden.



Pretzel Trees

Cover your work surface with wax paper. Arrange pretzel sticks in rows on the wax paper spaced a few inches apart. Melt white candy melts according to the instructions. Place a sandwich bag in a measuring cup with the top of the bag folded over the sides of the cup. Ask an adult to pour about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the melted candy into the plastic bag. Twist the top of the bag closed; then use scissors to snip off one bottom corner. Drizzle the melted candy in a tree shape on top of each pretzel stick. Before the candy sets, sprinkle it with candy sprinkles. ★



Candy Bar Bites

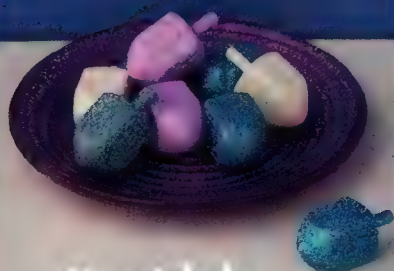
Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Arrange square pretzels in rows, a couple of inches apart. Place an unwrapped bite-size chocolate candy bar on top of each pretzel. Bake in a preheated 250-degree oven for about 5 minutes until candy bars soften. Ask an adult to remove the pan from the oven. Place a second square pretzel on top of each chocolate candy to make sandwiches. Let cool completely. Then dip the pretzel sandwiches in melted white chocolate. Let excess white chocolate drip back into the bowl. Then hold the pretzel sandwich over another bowl and coat the candy with sprinkles. Place on wax paper to harden.



Festival of Lights

Celebrate the light and joy of Hanukkah with DIY decor!

Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish holiday that is celebrated every November or December. This year, Hanukkah is December 2–10.



Dreidels

Decorate dreidels that sparkle and shine. Before you begin, cover your work surface. Start with a few plastic dreidels. Working with one at a time, hold a dreidel by its handle and use a foam brush to coat the rest of it with glue. Before the glue dries, hold the dreidel over a disposable plate and shake glitter over it until the glue is covered. Set the dreidel on a piece of wax paper to dry. Once dry, repeat the steps to cover the handle. When the glue and glitter are dry, use the dreidels as a desk decoration or table centerpiece.

Menorah

Make a menorah for a wall using washi tape. (Be sure to ask a parent's permission before attaching tape to a wall.)

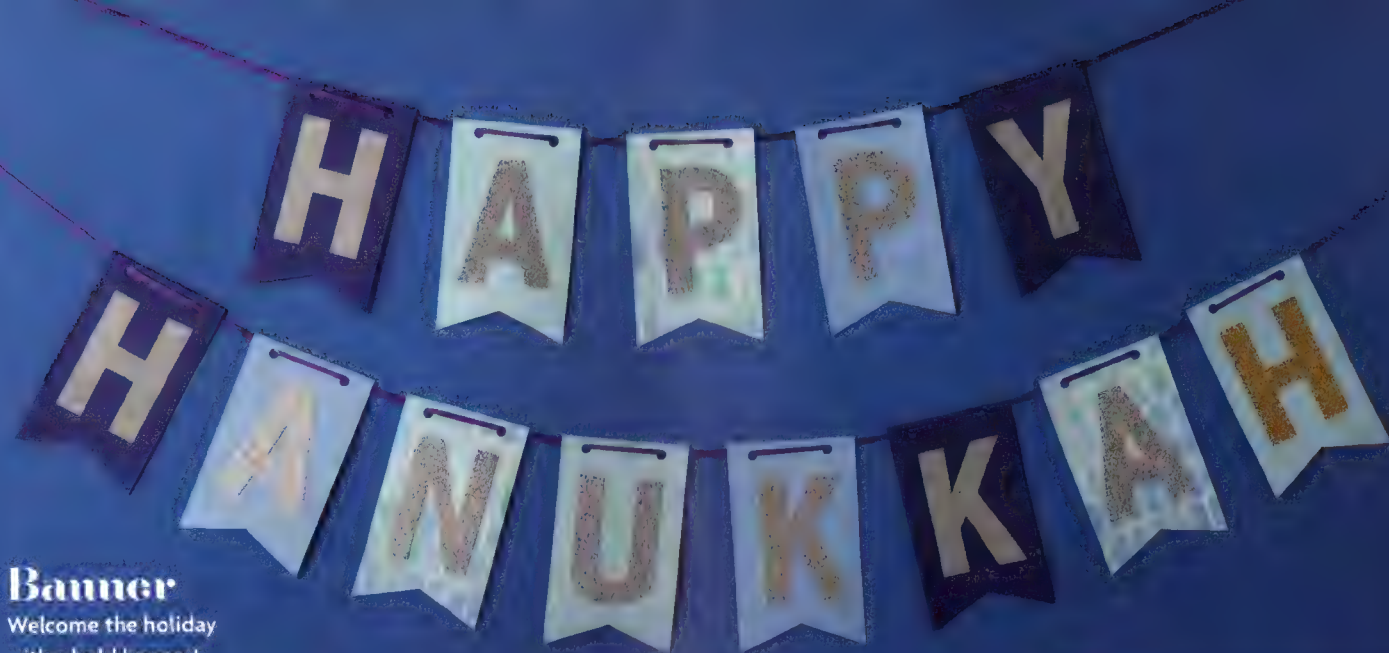


1. Use strips of purple washi tape to create the base of the menorah as shown.

2. Use nine strips of tape (all the same length) to create the candles. Attach them to the wall.

3. Each night of Hanukkah, add a tape "flame" to one of the candles. To make a flame, cut a piece of glitter tape into a triangle shape.





Banner

Welcome the holiday with a bold banner!



1. Make a banner template using scrap paper: Measure and cut a 5-by-4-inch rectangle. Fold the rectangle in half lengthwise and cut toward the fold at an angle (as shown) to make a notch.



2. Trace around the template onto card stock to make 13 pennants. (You'll need a few sheets of card stock.) Use a hole punch to make two holes near the top of each pennant, about an inch apart.



3. Use letter stickers to spell "Happy Hanukkah," using one letter per pennant. Cut two long pieces of thin ribbon.



4. Thread "Happy" onto the first ribbon. Then thread "Hanukkah" onto the second ribbon. Ask an adult to help you hang the banner.

Illustrations: Monika Roe Styling: Andrea Debbink

Luminaria

Shine bright with a colorful luminaria. Cover your work surface before you begin. Start with a plain glass candleholder or vase (available at craft stores). Cut small squares of purple or blue tissue paper. Working on a small section at a time, use a foam brush to coat the outside of the candleholder with glue. Before it dries, cover the glue with

overlapping tissue paper squares. Then move on to the next small section. Once the whole surface is covered, use the foam brush to cover the tissue paper with glue. Let dry. Use a battery-powered tea light to make the luminaria glow! ★



BEST FRIEND

Test your friendship knowledge with this just-for-fun quiz!



1. Would you rather open a teeny tiny gift box or a giant gift bag?

* You: friend:



2. What's your favorite thing about winter?

* You: friend:

3. Who is your favorite actor?

* You: friend:

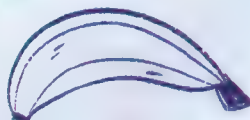


4. Would you rather paint your bedroom walls orange or green?

* You: friend:

5. Which TV show would you love to guest-star on?

* You: friend:



6. What's the best snack to grab after school?

* You: friend:



7. Would you rather have your birthday party at an amusement park or a water park?

* You: friend:



8. What's your favorite book?

* You: friend:

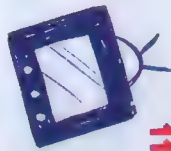
9. Would you rather spend a night in a tree house or in a submarine?

* You: friend:



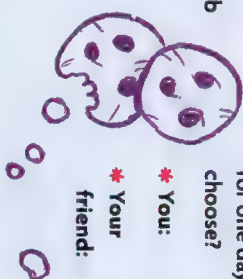
10. Who is your hero?

* You: friend:



11. Kittens or puppies?

* You: friend:



12. If you could turn into an animal for one day, what would you choose?

* You: friend:



BRAIN BUSTERS

Illustrations: Christine Almeda

To take the quiz, sit face-to-face with a friend. First, answer each question about yourself. Then guess how your friend would answer the question about herself. Have your friend do the same on the opposite page. No peeking! Then compare answers to see how many you each got right.

1. Would you rather open a teeny tiny gift box or a giant gift bag?

* You:
* Your friend:



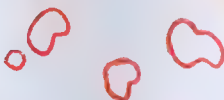
2. What's your favorite thing about winter?

* You:
* Your friend:



3. Who is your favorite actor?

* You:
* Your friend:



4. Would you rather paint your bedroom walls orange or green?

* You:
* Your friend:



5. Which TV show would you love to guest-star on?

* You:
* Your friend:



6. What's the best snack to grab after school?

* You:
* Your friend:



7. Would you rather have your birthday party at an amusement park or a water park?

* You:
* Your friend:



8. What's your favorite book?

* You:
* Your friend:



9. Would you rather spend a night in a tree house or in a submarine?

* You:
* Your friend:



10. Who is your hero?

* You:
* Your friend:



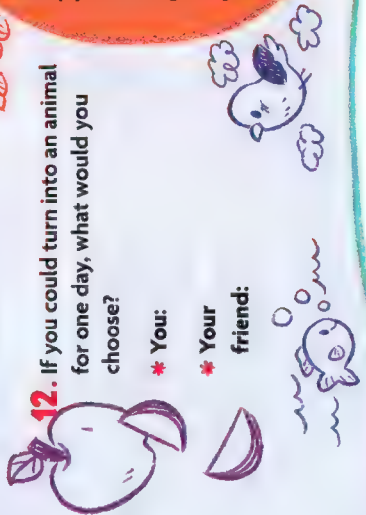
11. Kittens or puppies?

* You:
* Your friend:



12. If you could turn into an animal for one day, what would you choose?

* You:
* Your friend:



WOODLAND WONDERLAND

Make holiday ornaments inspired by nature!

If you collect natural materials from the outdoors, make sure you have the property owner's permission and help from a parent. Never remove items from living plants.

Gather only acorns, twigs, and pinecones that are already on the ground.

Before making any crafts, be sure to cover your work surface and your clothing.

TWIG TREES

Build a mini Christmas tree!

1.

Paint a wooden craft stick with nontoxic acrylic paint. Let dry.

2.



Gather 10–15 small twigs. Ask an adult to help you break or cut the largest twig so it's about 4 inches long. Continue breaking twigs so that each one is a little shorter than the one before it.

3.

Starting with the shortest twig at the top, glue each twig to the craft stick. Let dry. Finish by decorating with mini pom-poms.



PINECONE ELVES

Craft holiday elves from pinecones!

ACORN TOADSTOOLS

Create cute mushrooms using acorn caps and clay!

1.

Use a pinecone for the elf body and a wooden bead for the head. Cut two small mitten shapes from felt for the hands. Then cut one large heart shape for the feet. Use glue to attach the head, hands, and feet as shown.

2.

For the hat, use a circle template that's about 6 inches across. Trace around the template onto the felt, and then cut out the circle. Cut the circle into four equal pieces. Each piece will make one elf hat.

3.

To attach the hat, run a line of fabric glue along one of the straight edges. Overlap the glued edge over the other straight edge to make a cone. Hold edges together with a clothespin until the glue dries. Finish by gluing the hat to the top of the head.

1.

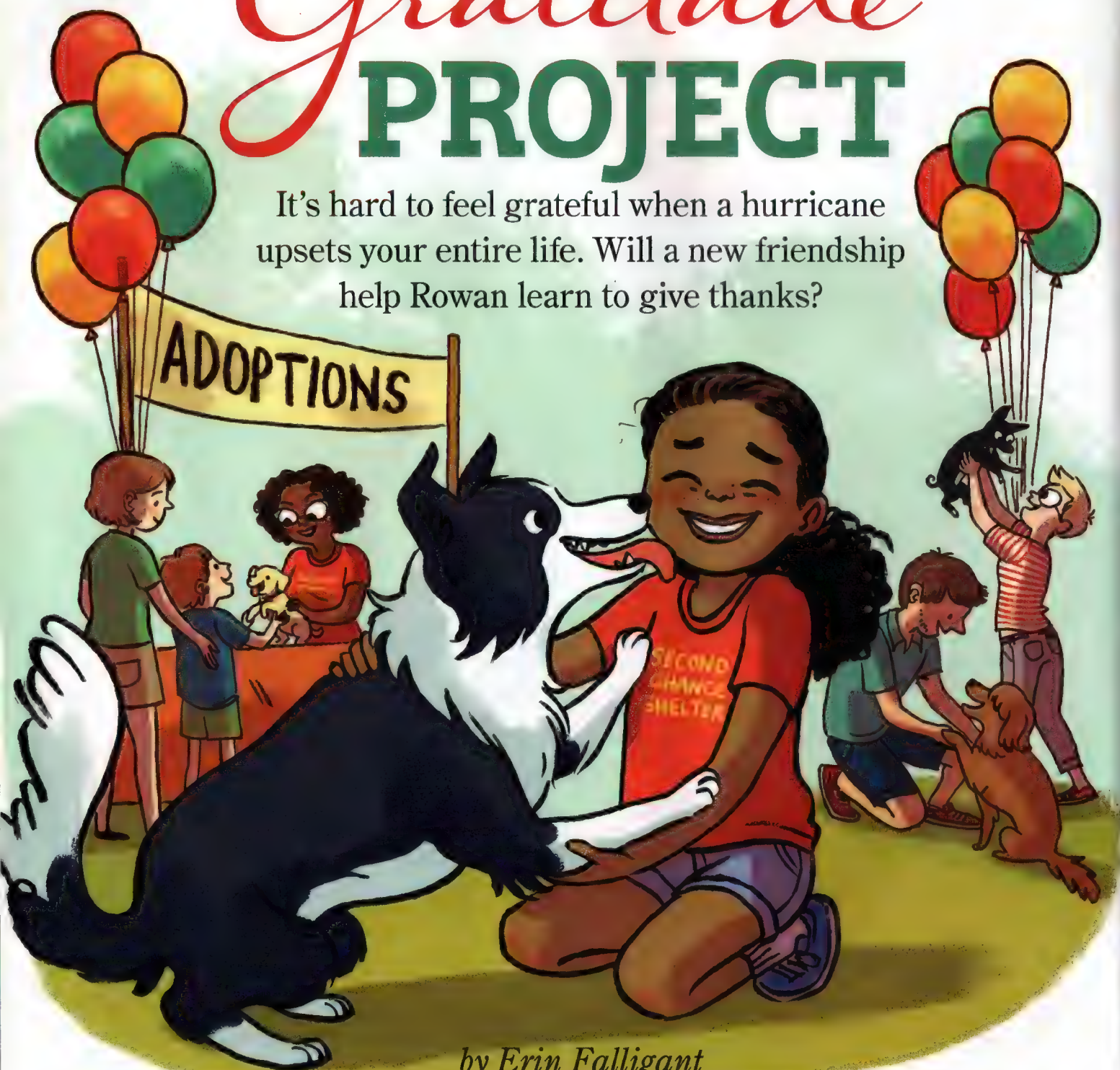
Start with a clean acorn cap. Paint the cap with nontoxic acrylic paint. Let dry. Use a small paintbrush to paint white dots on the cap. Let dry.

2.

To make the mushroom stem, start with a marble-size ball of white air-dry clay. Roll the clay into a log shape, and press it into the acorn cap. Let dry overnight. Once the clay is dry, glue the stem in place. Let dry. ★

THE Gratitude PROJECT

It's hard to feel grateful when a hurricane
upsets your entire life. Will a new friendship
help Rowan learn to give thanks?



by Erin Falligant

I stared at the pile of paper feathers on my desk. We were supposed to write things we were grateful for on those feathers—one each day—and glue them to our paper turkeys. By Thanksgiving, my turkey would have twenty-two feathers. Twenty-two things I felt grateful for.

But right now, I couldn't come up with a single one.

"Rowan, do you have a question about the Gratitude Project?" Mr. Beckett stood by my desk.

Yeah, I had questions all right. Like, *Why is everyone else already writing on their feathers? And, Why are fifth-graders still making turkeys out of construction paper? And, When can I go back to my old school?*

But I just shook my head. Mr. Beckett wouldn't understand.

Ever since the hurricane hit two months ago, everything had changed. Our house had flooded, so Mom and I had moved in with Aunt Jen and Uncle Rich. I had to share a bedroom with my eight-year-old cousin, Calvin—a boy. I had to leave my neighborhood behind and go to a new school.

Everything was different.

Everything was hard.

And I was *not* feeling grateful.

After school on Friday, I ignored the paper turkey tacked to my bulletin board—and the two blank feathers sitting on my desk.

I tried to focus on my homework. But how's a

girl supposed to do fractions when all she can hear from the other side of the curtain is the *clip-clop, clip-clop ka-POW!* of a video game?

"Calvin, use your headphones!" I snapped.

The curtain slid sideways, and Calvin's smiling face popped into view. "Sorry," he said. "Wanna play Rodeo Roundup?"

I shook my head. I'd been playing the video game with Calvin almost every day, and I'd had about as much cattle herding and barrel racing as I could stand.

Calvin's face fell, and the curtain did too. Then the volume on his game went up instead of down. "Calvin!"

This time when the curtain slid open, Mom's face appeared. "Everything OK in here?" she asked. Her eyes looked tired, maybe from driving into the city every day for work. Or from sleeping on the lumpy futon in the living room.


I knew the last couple of months had been hard on Mom, too. But I had to whine to *somebody*—I couldn't help it!

"It's not OK," I said. "I'm cooped up behind a curtain. Calvin's video game is driving me crazy. And I just want to go *home*."

When Mom opened her mouth, I knew exactly what she was going to say. "We should feel grateful to have a place to stay, Rowan," she reminded me. "Some people are still living in hotels—and some in shelters. We'll rebuild our home, but others can't. We're lucky."

"I know!" I gave an exasperated sigh. "I know."





But it's still hard. And nobody at my new school understands." I pushed past Mom to go get a glass of water—and ran right into Aunt Jen, who was standing in the hall.

She bent down to give me a reassuring smile. "I know it's hard, sweetie," she said. "But it'll get better." When she straightened back up, she pulled out her phone. "And you know what? I have a friend who understands exactly how you feel."

She showed me a photo. "Meet Sunny, a border collie at the shelter where I work."

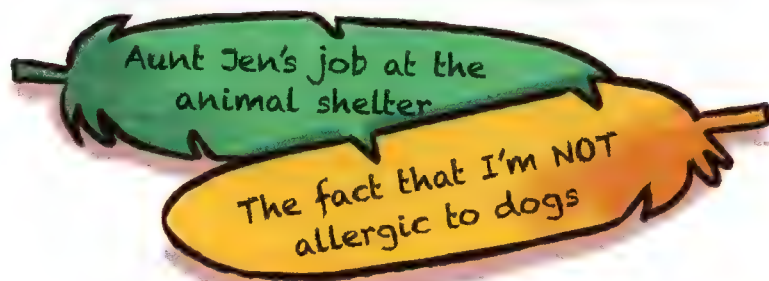
Staring into that sweet face, I *wanted* to meet Sunny—as soon as possible. He had thick black fur, a white chest and paws, and two brown eyebrows that made him look super curious. As he gazed at me from that photo, his tongue hung out in a wide doggy smile.

"Sunny was rescued during the hurricane," explained Aunt Jen. "But he's feeling a little cooped up now, like you. I bet he'd like to meet you. Tomorrow maybe?"

"I want to meet Sunny!" called Calvin from the bedroom.

Aunt Jen shook her head. "You can't, baby. You're allergic, remember?"

By the time I went back into the bedroom, I had figured out something to be grateful for—two things in fact. I wrote them on my paper feathers:



On Saturday afternoon, I followed Aunt Jen down the long hall at the shelter. A chorus of barks rose up to greet us from the kennels on either side.

To my right, a yellow lab gazed up at me, his tail thumping on the ground. To my left, a tiny mutt jumped up and down, begging me to stop and visit *her* first.

Some dogs paced. Others were curled up in the corners of their kennels. "There are so many!"

I cried, my voice breaking.

Aunt Jen nodded. "Hundreds of dogs and cats were left homeless after the storm," she

explained. "And our shelter was already full to begin with. Many were reunited with their owners, but others don't have a home to go back to."

I bit my lip. I sure knew what that felt like.

When Aunt Jen stopped in front of a large kennel, a black and white dog leaped up to greet her. Sunny!

The collie was so excited that he spun in circles, waiting for Aunt Jen to unlock the cage. But instead of letting him out, she invited me in. "Let's calm him down so we can get his leash on," she said.

As I stepped into the kennel, Sunny jumped up and nearly knocked me backward.

"Tell him to sit," said Aunt Jen. "He'll get a treat if he does."

At the word *treat*, Sunny dropped his rump.

"He understood you! Good boy!" I rubbed his head and squatted down beside him.

"He's *very* smart," said Aunt Jen, giving Sunny

the treat. "But he has a lot of energy that he doesn't know what to do with. So he acts out sometimes." She pointed to the chewed-up edge of the dog bed in the corner of the kennel. "That's why he gets lots of extra walks."

At the word *walk*, Sunny started panting. He looked from me to Aunt Jen and back again. His brown eyebrows twitched, as if to say, *Walk? When? Now? Me? Really? Yes!*

Aunt Jen clicked his leash onto his collar, and then we carefully opened the kennel door.

Sunny led the way down the hall. He strained at his leash, lunging toward the door under the EXIT sign.

The door opened into a large fenced-in play area. "I'll take him for the first lap," said Aunt Jen. "Then it's your turn."

As we walked around the yard, Sunny darted from side to side, sniffing at the fence. "Sit," Aunt Jen said every now and then. And he would. Then she'd reward him with a treat, and he'd jump up and tug at his leash again.

"It looks like he wants to run," I pointed out. "Can we take him off the leash?"

Aunt Jen hesitated. "We want to teach him good behavior," she said, "so he can find a good home. But . . . you're right. Border collies need to run. Just be prepared—he's fast." She grinned at me as she unclipped his leash.

Sunny took off like a shot. He ran circles around us, his tongue dangling happily out of his mouth.

I chased after him—I couldn't help it! Until he planted himself right in front of me and forced me to stop. "What's he doing?" I asked, leaning over to catch my breath.

Aunt Jen laughed. "He's herding you," she said. "Border collies were bred to herd sheep, to stop them from straying away and getting lost. Sunny has probably never met a sheep, but he herds people, especially kids. He thinks it's his job to keep you safe."

"Aw . . ." I bent to kiss Sunny's head. He smiled up at me, and then we were off and running again.

When Aunt Jen said that our time in the yard



was up, I gave Sunny the biggest hug. I loved him already! And that made me wonder . . . “Why haven’t his owners come to get him?” I asked. “If he were my dog, I’d find him—no matter what.”

Aunt Jen sighed. “We think Sunny might have been a stray before the storm. He was so thin, and he’s not used to being on a leash. So he might have been living on the streets.”

On the streets?

“Oh, buddy! I’m sorry.” I buried my face in his fur.

“But our goal is to find a family for him now,” said Aunt Jen. She gave Sunny a reassuring pat.

Before we left the shelter, I sat with Sunny in his kennel to calm him down. As he gnawed on his rawhide bone, I kissed his head and promised him I’d be back soon.

And I reminded myself that I had something to be grateful for today. I would write it on a paper feather as soon as I got home. I was grateful for . . .

Sunny, my new furry friend



The week between visits to the shelter felt like the longest week ever. I could hardly wait to get back to Sunny’s kennel—to unlock the door and set him free, if only for a little while.

I raced down the hall ahead of Aunt Jen. But when I got to Sunny’s kennel, it was empty!

“Oh!” said Aunt Jen, stepping up behind me. “He must be out back with another volunteer.”

Sunny was out back all right. But he wasn’t alone with a volunteer. There was a *family* back there playing with him!

As we stepped outside, Aunt Jen pulled me toward a bench. “He’s doing a meet and greet,” she whispered. “If we’re lucky, it’ll go well—this could be Sunny’s forever family. Let’s watch.”

Aunt Jen sounded excited. But me? Not so much. As I watched Sunny play tug-of-war with a teenage girl, my emotions played tug-of-war, too. Of course I wanted him to find a family. But would I have to say good-bye to him already? I’d just met him!

After a few minutes, the girl’s mom said something to the shelter volunteer. Pretty soon, the volunteer was clipping Sunny’s leash onto his collar and walking back toward us.

“Could we spend a few minutes with Sunny?” Aunt Jen asked. I could have kissed her for that.

Sunny was already bounding toward my outstretched hands. I gave him an extra long hug, as if to say, “He’s *mine*.”

But I knew he wasn’t.

After the family left, Aunt Jen said, “I hope they’ll come back and spend more time with Sunny. We need to find him a home before the end of the month.”

Something in her tone made me sit up straight. “Before the end of the month? Why?”

She sighed. "We're sending some of the dogs to larger cities out east, where they'll have a better chance of being adopted."

"Out east? No!" I hugged Sunny again.

Aunt Jen rubbed my back. "Don't worry, sweetie," she said. "We're having an Adoption Day here at the shelter next Saturday. Hopefully, someone will come and fall in love with Sunny. Let's keep our fingers crossed, OK?"

I crossed my fingers—and my toes. But my insides flooded with guilt. Because a few minutes ago, a family had come to meet Sunny. And I *hadn't* wanted them to fall in love with him.

Somehow, I had to try to help Sunny find a home—even if it broke my heart.

On Adoption Day, the shelter was so full! Families clustered throughout the halls, reading the information cards on each kennel and squatting down to say hello to the dogs.

Out back in the play yard, I helped Aunt Jen clean kennels. I was hosing down a cage when something caught my eye: Sunny, prancing into the yard.

A volunteer kept him on a short leash as a boy and his parents followed behind. The boy was about Calvin's age, and he ran beside Sunny, eager to play.

"Can we take Sunny off his leash?" asked the boy's father.

The volunteer unclipped Sunny, and that's when the circus began. Sunny raced in circles, with the

boy chasing after him.

At the sound of his laughter, jealousy pricked at my heart. For just a moment, I looked away.

Then I heard the boy shriek. I looked up just in time to see Sunny trying to herd him, nudging him back toward his parents.

"What's he doing?" asked the boy. He sounded scared.



And suddenly, I was too. What if this family *didn't* fall in love with Sunny? What if they left, just like the other family? What if Sunny was still here at the end of the month—and had to be shipped off to a city out east? What if I never saw him again?

Without thinking, I dropped the hose and hurried toward the boy. "He's herding you!" I said, forcing a smile.

"Hurting me?" The boy cocked his head, looking like a scared puppy himself.

No! How could I make him understand?

Calvin's face popped into my mind, and then the right words did, too.

"Have you ever played Rodeo Roundup?" I asked the boy.

His face lit up, and he nodded.

"You know how you drive the cattle from the field back into their pens to keep them safe?"

He nodded again.

"Well that's what Sunny is doing! He's just playing a game where he tries to make you run in certain directions—to keep you safe."

The boy's face spread into a huge smile. And then he was running again, dodging this way and that, playing a game with Sunny.

I went back to cleaning the kennel, but I kept one eye on the boy. When his family finally left—without Sunny—my heart sank.

Aunt Jen stepped up beside me. "You were great with that boy," she said with a smile.

I couldn't speak over the lump in my throat. I had tried to help Sunny. But would it be enough? Would the family come back for him?

The day before Thanksgiving, I sat down at my desk. Our Gratitude Project was supposed to be done by tomorrow. So far, I had glued fifteen feathers onto my turkey. Could I come up with seven more things to be grateful for?

As the smell of Mom's pumpkin pie drifted down the hall, I closed my eyes. I could almost imagine myself back in my old house, in my old room. Smells are funny that way. Whenever I smelled Mom's pie, I felt like I was home.

So I opened my eyes and wrote it down on a gratitude feather: *Mom's pumpkin pie.*

Clip-clop, clip-clop, ka-POW!

I smiled and wrote on another feather: *Calvin's Rodeo Roundup.* Sure, the sound was annoying, but without Calvin's video game, I wouldn't have been able to help Sunny make friends with that boy at the shelter.

When a face burst through the curtain, I jumped.

"Hey, girl," Aunt Jen grinned.

"Want to go to the shelter?"

"Tonight?"

She nodded. "There's someone you might want to say good-bye to."

My stomach clenched. "Sunny? Are they sending him out east—already?"

When she shook her head, warmth spread through my chest. Sunny wasn't going out east. "The boy and his family want to adopt him?"

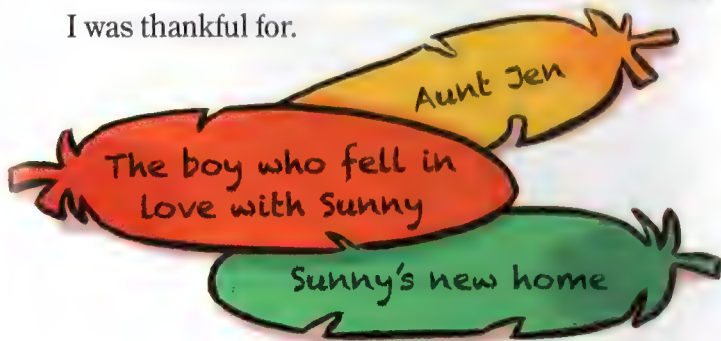
She nodded again and smiled wide.

I jumped up from my desk so fast that I nearly knocked all the feathers to the ground. I wrapped my arms around Aunt Jen and squeezed her tight.

**I HAD
TRIED TO help
SUNNY. BUT WOULD
IT BE ENOUGH?
WOULD THE family
COME BACK
FOR HIM?**



And suddenly, I could think of a gazillion things I was thankful for.



As I pulled away from Aunt Jen, a thought struck. "You know what I'm grateful for?" I asked her.

"Me?" Calvin stuck his face through the curtain. He didn't like being left out.

"Yes, you," I said, messing up his hair. "But also the storm."

"The hurricane?" asked Aunt Jen.

I nodded. "If the hurricane hadn't hit, Sunny might still be living on the streets. No one would have rescued him. And he wouldn't have found his new home!"

Aunt Jen smiled. "That's right, Rowan," she said. "That's absolutely right."

As I followed her and Calvin out of our room, I realized something else. The storm had helped *me* find my home, too. Maybe it wasn't the house back in the city that I had shared with Mom. Maybe we'd never be in that same house again.

But as I stepped into the warmth of the kitchen, where Mom was sliding a pumpkin pie onto a cooling rack, I *knew* I was home.

And I was grateful.



Meet the Author

Erin Falligant



Age 10



Now

When I was a girl, I wanted to save every animal. We had a miniature schnauzer named Gretyl, along with several cats who had wandered onto our farm. Furry friends have always topped my gratitude list!

Gift Quiz

A SPECIAL THIS OR THAT

Would you rather give your friend . . .

funny, fuzzy socks

OR

a silly, slouchy hat?

a book of woodland fairy stories

OR

a blank book for writing new stories?

homemade bath bombs

OR

homemade lip balm?

a pretty jar full of cookie mix

OR

cheerful and uplifting notes?

a mug decorating kit

OR

a marshmallow making kit?

rice-filled hand warmers

OR

colorful cup cozies?

a game you can play together

OR

beads and string to make bracelets together?

a basket filled with nail pens and polish

OR

fun hairstyling accessories?

a pillow decorated with markers

OR

a hand-painted tote bag?

a personalized ornament

OR

a sparkly sun catcher?

a decorated picture frame

OR

a mini memory book?

a personalized water bottle

OR

a box for storing trinkets and treasures?

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

I WAS BORN ON
NOVEMBER 26, 1972, IN
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS,
ILLINOIS.



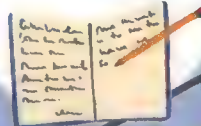
WHEN I WAS NINE YEARS OLD,
MY FAMILY MOVED TO STEAMBOAT
SPRINGS, COLORADO. IT WAS A
SMALL MOUNTAIN TOWN WITH A SKI
RESORT AND ONLY ONE STOPLIGHT!



I TRIED MANY SPORTS,
INCLUDING FIGURE
SKATING, SPEED SKATING,
HOCKEY, HORSEBACK
RIDING, AND SKI RACING.



I LOVED TO CREATE!
ART, CRAFTS, AND POETRY
WERE MY FAVORITE WAYS
TO BE CREATIVE.



BUT MY BIGGEST
PASSION WAS GYMNASTICS.
I DREAMED OF GOING TO THE
OLYMPICS ONE DAY.



MY OLDER BROTHER
SEAN AND I WERE GOOD FRIENDS.
HE INCLUDED ME IN HIS ACTIVITIES
AND ALWAYS TAUGHT ME
WHATEVER HE WAS LEARNING.



I TOOK RIDING LESSONS
UNTIL THE DAY MY HORSE GOT
SPOOKED. I ALMOST FELL OFF
AND WAS LEFT HANGING BY
ONE STIRRUP!



TURN THE PAGE TO DISCOVER WHO I AM!

SHE'S...
**SHANNON
DUNN-DOWNING**
SNOWBOARDER

In 1988, when Shannon Dunn was a teenager, a new sport came to her mountain town: snowboarding! Shannon's brother Sean encouraged her to give the new sport a try. She fell a lot that first day. After skiing for so long, it felt awkward to stand sideways as she went down the mountain. But Shannon came to love the sport and bought a snowboard of her own. Soon, she was snowboarding as often as possible with her brother, her best friend Betsy (the only other girl snowboarder in town), and a group of boys at the local ski resort.

Back then, Shannon didn't know how popular snowboarding would become; she only knew she loved it. Yet just three years after strapping on a board for the first time, Shannon signed her first professional contract with a company that made snowboards. The contract meant that the company would pay for her travel to competitions, about four per year. In 1991, she went to an international competition for the first time in the mountains of France, and she took third place!

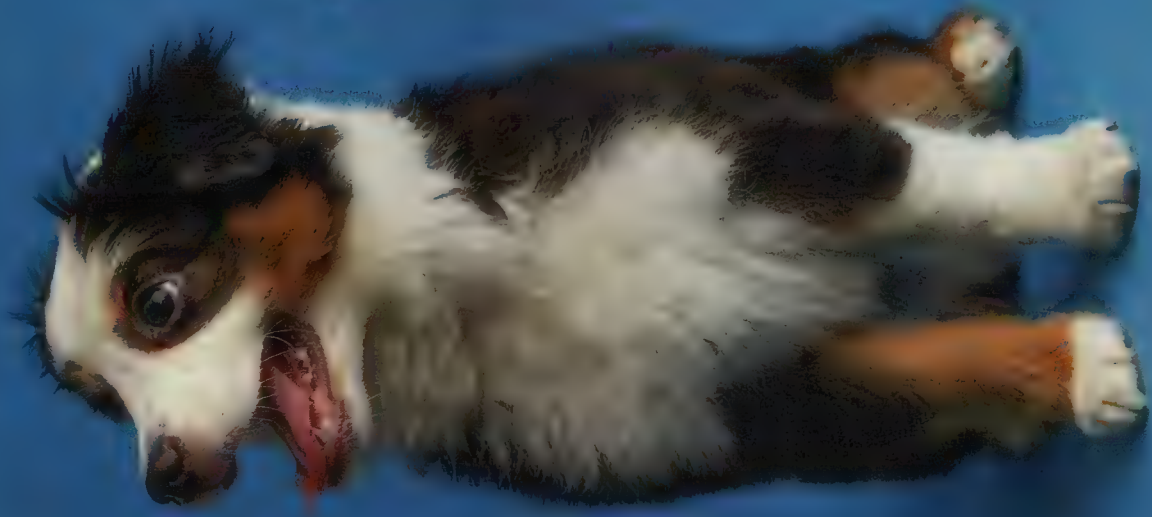
Shannon's success on the slopes led to new opportunities—including the chance to help design one of the first women's pro model snowboards and have it named after her. This was a big opportunity. At the time, snowboards and snowboard-related clothing for girls and women didn't exist. Shannon drew the art for the snowboard herself, huge yellow sunflowers on a red background. The men in the company argued that the design was "too girlie" and that the snowboard wouldn't sell. With the support of her team manager, Shannon convinced the company to use her design. It became the highest-selling snowboard in the company's line!

In 1997, Shannon won a gold medal in the half-pipe at the first winter X Games, an international competition for extreme sports. The following year, snowboarding debuted at the Olympics, and Shannon took home a bronze medal. She was the first American woman to win an Olympic medal in snowboarding! Shannon had come a long way in a short time, from trying a new sport at her local mountain to becoming a pioneer among women athletes. These days, Shannon no longer competes, but she still loves to snowboard and surf! ★

"TRY NEW THINGS AND DON'T BE
AFRAID OF FAILURE. SOMETIMES IT
JUST TAKES A STEP OF FAITH TO GET
INVOLVED. BUT YOU WILL REGRET IT
WAYS MORE SO IF IT'S NOT IT."
—SHANNON DUNN DOWLING



✂️ Cut along the dotted lines to remove your potter. ✂️



YOU MAKE
ME SMILE!

Photo: Wren C. and Sloane

★ American Girl

Wrapped
with love



Photo: Wren C. and Sloane S.

I'm a picky eater!



Dear American Girl,

When I try new foods, I hate them and I spit them out! I don't want to be a picky eater, but I don't know how to make it better.

Picky Eater

Most picky eaters only eat what they like, so trying different foods shows you're probably not as finicky as you think. Keep up the adventurous eating spirit by blending new ingredients into your favorite meals. For example, add spinach to a fruit smoothie. It will turn green, but you won't taste the leafy greens. If you love mac and cheese, add cooked cauliflower puree to the cheese sauce to get some veggies the easy way. Also, don't forget your taste buds will change over time, so foods you didn't like when you were little might become more appealing in time. Keep giving new flavors a try, both cooked and raw, and you'll be a foodie before you know it!

Dear American Girl,

I have trouble in math class, and my grades have started to drop. I'm too embarrassed to ask for help. What do I do?

Math Problems

Calculating equations and solving word problems can be tricky for a lot of people—even grown-ups! The truth is that everyone can use help at one time or another, and learning to ask for it is a skill that everyone needs. Say to your teacher, "I'm not understanding our math lessons, and I need help. Are there websites or games that can help me?" That tells your teacher that you are trying and that you care about learning. At home, ask a parent or sibling to assist with homework. Every person learns differently, and by working with new people, you may pick up some great tips and tricks. Your grades are sure to improve when you ask for the help you need.



Dear American Girl,

On my best friend's birthday, I put a lot of thought (and money) into getting her a special gift. For my birthday, she gave me something used from her house. It doesn't seem like she thought about me at all!

Help!

Your friend may not be a great gift-giver, or she may not have had the help to get you a great gift. Try not to take it personally. Your friend might not have the money to buy what she really wants for you, which may be embarrassing for her. It's also possible the used present from her home was actually something special to her that she wanted to share with you. In the future, try to be grateful for any gift you receive, remembering your friendship is more important and truly the best present of all.

Dear American Girl,

I teamed up with a friend to do a project. I did my part, and she had a few weeks to do her part. But on the day it was due, she hadn't completed the assignment.

I was so mad!

Friendship Troubles

A strong friendship is based on honesty, so it's best to share your feelings in order to avoid any bitterness coming between you and your friend. Choose a time when you can talk face-to-face, and start by asking some questions about why she didn't complete the assignment. It's possible she's dealing with a stressful situation at home or just misunderstood her role in the project. It's OK to share your disappointment and anger, but don't do so in a hurtful way. If your friendship is a good one, this talk may help make your bond even stronger.

Dear American Girl,

I have a five-year-old cousin. She's really sweet, and I love playing with her, but my family says that we have to let her win and let her pick first. I don't want to be mean, but that's not fair!

Older Cousin

Let's face it, when it comes to competing with a five-year-old, there is no competition. While it's true that we all need to learn to be good losers, you are older and wiser and that's a major advantage (some might call it an unfair advantage). Since you have such fun together otherwise, skip the competitive games. Instead, play games that don't have a winner and a loser, or plan for crafts and other activities you both like. That way spending time together will be fun for everyone, and then everyone wins!

Advice from You

Dear American Girl,

I have a neighbor friend who always gossips about other people. Some of the things she says aren't even true! I don't like it, but I don't know what to do.

Gossips

Be honest with her. Tell her that you don't think what she's doing is kind. She needs to know how you feel.

-Lily

Whatever you do, try not to spread the gossip she's telling you.

-Mia



If your neighbor starts to gossip about someone, just say something kind about that person. You won't be engaging in the gossip.

-Gigi

Tell her she could lose trust with people if she keeps gossiping. No one wants to be friends with someone she can't trust.

-Izzy

You could let her know that you like having her as a friend, but it makes you sad when she gossips, and you'd like her to stop.

-Jill

Ask her over for a chitchat. Tell her how you feel, because she needs to know that gossip isn't cool!

-Marika

I had the same problem, and I realized that my friend was trying to get my attention. The best solution for me was to walk away from her when she started gossiping.

-Sofia

If you know that what she's saying isn't true, then stand up for the people she is gossiping about.

-Keara

Help Other Girls!

A friend moved to Germany last year. We do video chats, but with our busy schedules, we hardly get to talk. I'm worried about losing our friendship.

What can I do?

Do you have advice to help solve this problem?
Or do you need advice for solving your own problem?
Send letters to:

Help!
American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

We can't respond to all letters. But we read everything you send!

BEHIND THE Scenes

Puppies! Pretzels! Frozen yogurt! Here are some more highlights from our day as editors at *American Girl* magazine.



Quick frozen yogurt breaks are important.



Andrea and Gretchen helped us create pretzel masterpieces.



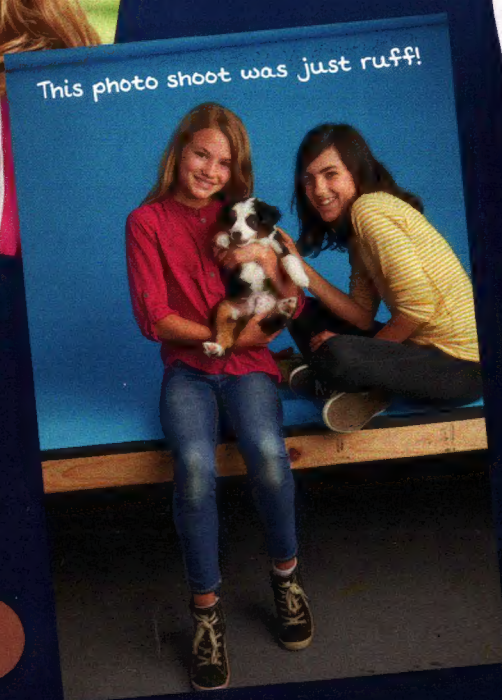
Yum. Time to taste-test!



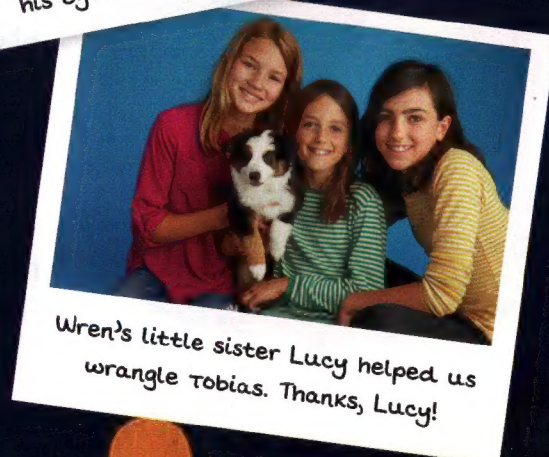
This is what our work space looked like after testing the peppermint pops!



Oops! Tobias's hat fell down over his eyes during the photo shoot!



This photo shoot was just ruff!



Wren's little sister Lucy helped us wrangle Tobias. Thanks, Lucy!



*Memories
make the season
merrier.*



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American Girl

Here's what we're excited about
at **American Girl** magazine!

Simply Sweet

Cookies that are
almost too pretty
to eat.



Super Sitter

Babysitting kits that
are fun and simple
to make.

It's OK!

Girls share their most
embarrassing
moments.

A Dream Come True

A quiz to help you discover
your goal-setting style!

AG's Pretzel Bags

Punch out these labels and staple them to a baggie filled with treats!

FROM:

TO:

Happy Holidays!

FROM:

10:



Wishing You
A SWEET HOLIDAY!



FROM:

TO:

Joy TO THE World

FROM:

TO:



**Peace, LOVE,
and JOY**